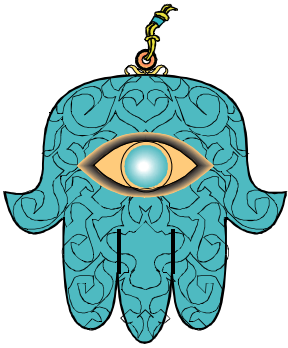
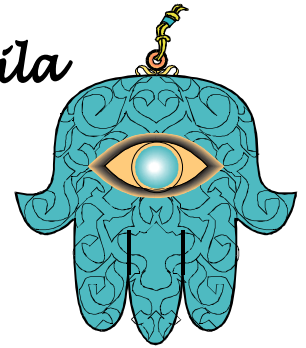


Spiritual Thought for the Week

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Dreams

(Parashat Va-Yeshev – Genesis 37:1- 40:23)

American writer and poet Henry David Thoreau (19th Century) wrote: **“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.”** Never was this truer than with Joseph, the young man whose brothers said of him **“Here comes the dreamer”**. From the young age of seventeen, Joseph began to dream big dreams. He saw himself as a future leader, and he was not afraid to express himself about his big dreams: **“Hear this dream which I have dreamed,”** he tells his brothers. **“There we were, binding sheaves in the field, when suddenly my sheaf stood up and remained upright; then your sheaves gathered around and bowed low to my sheaf.”** The very next day, Joseph shares another one of his dreams with his brothers: **“Look, I have had another dream; and this time, the sun, the moon and eleven stars were bowing down to me.”** Of course, his brothers were none too pleased with this dreamer, and Joseph’s dreams created jealousy and hatred towards him.

Yet Joseph never let go of his dreams. Throughout his trials and tribulations, Joseph lived according to Thoreau’s maxim of **“Go confidently in the direction of your dreams.”** His brothers beat him, stripped him, and sent him into a pit full of snakes and scorpions. They originally plotted to kill him, but opted instead to sell him into slavery. He is purchased in Egypt by Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh’s palace. After refusing to have sexual relations with Potiphar’s wife, she accuses Joseph of sexual harassment, and he ends up in an Egyptian jail. From the beating and humiliation by his brothers, all the way to his wrongful imprisonment, Joseph stays strong and refuses to give up on his dreams. His strong will and determination, as well as his keen talent to understand the dreams of others, all the while trying to realize his own, ultimately lift Joseph from the depths of an Egyptian jail to the heights of power in Egypt. Indeed, Joseph’s brothers end up bowing down to him, and he becomes the brilliant prince whose economic plan saves the entire Middle Eastern economy from total collapse and disaster.

In pursuing his dreams, clinging to them under all circumstances, Joseph completes the circle of a profound life experience that is common to all human beings – living out our dreams. Thousands of years before Thoreau, Joseph went confidently in the direction of his dreams. Thousands of years later, so should you.